



Branching Out

Creating Connections to End Sexual Violence

Fall 2015

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So Long...For Now!

By Katy Adler



As many of you have heard by now, my last day with the Sexual Assault Services program of Lutheran Social Services was Friday, September 11. I will be the Victim Advocate at Marquette University, where I will continue to work with sexual assault survivors, now on a college campus. This was a very difficult decision for me, as I have grown to love working in Racine County and feel so thankful to have met so many amazing people in the time I have been with SAS, but it is the right move for me at this time.

I am proud of the work that SAS does in the community, and the difference the program has made for many survivors. Personally, I am grateful to have worked in such an amazing program for seven years, and to have had the honor to walk alongside countless survivors of sexual assault. It has also been gratifying to see how many generous, compassionate people there are in the community, who are committed to ending sexual violence and improving how we respond to sexual assault victims.

Thank you to all of you who are reading this, whether you are a professional in the community, one of our incredible volunteers, a survivor, or simply someone who cares about SAS. Thank you for welcoming me in the community and for joining me in my efforts to increase compassion and empathy for survivors, and accountability for perpetrators of sexual violence. I will miss you and I will miss being a part of this community.

On to the future – I am excited to be able to pass the torch on to Samantha Sustachek, who has been with Sexual Assault Services for ten years, and has very recently accepted the SAS Program Supervisor position. Many of you know Sam, and know how much she has done in the community. I am confident that SAS will continue to do incredible work in Racine County with Samantha at the helm. Congratulations, Sam!

--Katy

Save the Date

Although it is only October, we are already making preparations for our annual wine tasting fundraiser. Mark your calendars for **Friday, January 29th, 2016**. We will fill you in on the details as we get closer to this can't miss event!

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Legislative Update

By Vicki Biehn

The Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault (WCASA) and certain legislators from the state of Wisconsin are working to pass a bill that would ensure that survivors of sexual assault have the right to have a victim advocate accompany them as they move through the criminal justice and medical systems.

This bill would allow a victim who wishes to have an advocate present to be accompanied by one during various stages of the criminal justice process. These stages would include the sexual assault forensic exam, law enforcement interview, and court proceedings. Currently, victims do not have this right, and sometimes victims are not allowed to have an advocate be there with them to provide this valuable emotional support.

Racine County is fortunate, because sexual assault victims are able to have an advocate with them as they move through these systems, but unfortunately, there are some places in the state where this is not the case. SAS believes that providing this emotional support and information to victims during these proceedings helps to restore some of the victims' sense of control over their lives. It may also help to keep victims engaged in the criminal justice process. If victims are supported as they proceed through these systems and stay engaged in the criminal justice process, more offenders may be held accountable for their crimes and all of us will be safer.

Please contact Vicki Biehn at 262-619-1634 or vbiehn@lsswis.org or Dominic Holt from WCASA at 608-257-1516 or dominich@wcasa.org if you have any questions about this upcoming legislation. If you agree that it is important for sexual assault survivors to have the right to have an advocate with them as they proceed through these systems, please consider writing a brief statement of support for victim accompaniment and email it to Dominic Holt at WCASA.

--vicki



SAS Wish List

- Volunteer Advocates!
- Gift cards/certificates from Target, Office Depot, grocery stores or other discount stores
- Courage to Heal book series
- New clothes for victims to wear when they leave the hospital (t-shirts, sweat pants, underwear, etc.)
- Body lotions & shower gels to be given to victims seen at the hospital
- General art and craft supplies for the children in our counseling program
- Bus tokens so that clients can access our services
- Forever stamps (the kind that do not expire as the rates change)
- Monetary donations are always needed and appreciated



Farewell Lauren!

I have never truly been great at goodbyes. If it were up to me, I would never have to say another goodbye in my life. Alas, unicorns still aren't real and I find myself, again, having to say goodbye. I can remember the first time I came to the SAS office as a girl looking for a place to volunteer... a place to find a passion. Terri and Katy were so gracious and kind. They took a chance on me and let me volunteer at the Child Advocacy Center as a Family Advocate during Sam's maternity leave. This led me to solidifying the master's program I wanted which then led me right back to SAS for an internship. I now leave SAS a mother, a woman with a master's degree in Social Work, and a therapist with one of the most enriching experiences of my life under my belt. SAS has walked beside me and supported me through so many life changes, I cannot find enough ways to say thank you. The friendships forged in this internship, the lessons learned, and the hearts I've had the honor of seeing heal are all so precious and priceless. Thank you to SAS for an amazing six months (really, two years) and thank you to the community for continuing to support this organization that changes lives in a way I have yet to see replicated elsewhere. These women are truly a gift to Racine and blessings to everyone they encounter. I count myself truly privileged to have had this experience.

Speak for those who can't speak, fight for those who can't fight, and love those who can't love themselves.



Rompiendo la Barrera

Breaking the Barrier

By Annabell Bustillos

As the Bilingual Outreach Advocate and also being a former medical interpreter, I am sometimes approached with questions about interpreters. So, I would like to take some time and offer some tips for working with interpreters.

The first thing I would like to discuss is the difference between the words “interpreter” and “translator”. People often use these words interchangeably, but there is a significant difference between the two. An interpreter is someone who interprets words that are being spoken by conveying the idea orally, while a translator translates words that are written by writing them. While some interpreters can be translators and vice versa, many cannot or do not want to do both. Using these words interchangeably may not seem like a big deal to most but can be displeasing to an interpreter or translator who is not able to do both interpretation and translation.

With that in mind I would like to share ten tips that I have found helpful when working with providers and individuals as an interpreter. The first few are specifically for providers or whoever is in charge of contacting the interpreter, and the rest are for anyone working with an interpreter.

1. **Choosing an interpreter-** If possible, choose an interpreter whose age, sex and background are similar to the patient. A survivor may feel reluctant to disclose uncomfortable information in front of an interpreter of a different gender.
2. **Hold a brief meeting-** If at all possible, hold a brief meeting with the interpreter, especially if it is your first time working with a professional interpreter. You may also want to let the interpreter introduce themselves and explain their role.
3. **Allow enough time-** Remember to allow enough time for the interpreted session, because interpreted conversations can require more time. What can be said in a few words in one language may require a lengthy paraphrase in another.
4. **Read body language-** Make eye contact and try to read body language during face-to-face encounters. Arrange yourself so that you, the survivor and the interpreter are visible to one another (i.e. triangular). Watch the survivor’s eyes and facial expression-when you speak and when the interpreter speaks. Look for signs of comprehension, confusion, agreement, or disagreement.

5. **Speak normally-** Speak in a normal voice, clearly, and not too fast or too loudly. It is usually easier for the interpreter to understand speech produced at normal speed and with normal rhythms, than artificially slow speech.
6. **Avoid jargon and technical terms-** Try to avoid idioms, technical words, or cultural references that might be difficult to translate. Some concepts may be easy for the interpreter to understand but extremely difficult to translate.
7. **Talk to the survivor directly-** Talk directly to the survivor, using first person. Be brief, explicit and basic. Remember that you are communicating with the survivor through an interpreter. Pause after a full thought for the interpretation to be accurate and complete. If you speak too long, the interpreter may not remember and include everything you say.
8. **Don’t say anything you would not want interpreted-** Don’t ask or say anything that you don’t want the survivor to hear. Expect everything you say to be interpreted, as well as everything the survivor and their family says.
9. **Be Patient-** Be patient and avoid interrupting during interpretation. Allow the interpreter as much time as necessary to ask questions, for repeats, and for clarification. Be prepared to repeat yourself in different words if your message is not understood. Professional interpreters do not translate word-for-word but rather concept-by-concept. Also remember that English is a direct language and may need to be relayed into complex grammar and a different communication pattern.
10. **Be sensitive to appropriate communication standards-** Different cultures have different protocols to discuss sensitive topics and to address physicians. Many ideas taken for granted in America do not exist in the other cultures and may need detailed explanation in another language.

Being able to use all of these tips during your contact with a survivor may not be feasible, but being aware of them and trying to follow as many as you can may make your contact go smoother.

—Annabell

Adapted from MSH: The Provider’s Guide to Quality and Culture, Available <http://erc.msh.org>





A Closer Look

By Carla Pratt

Often when dealing with clients who struggle with self-esteem issues and/or depression, I find that one of their struggles is being bullied by peers; both in person and over social media. Studies have shown that bullying over social media, also known as cyber-bullying, is easier to do than bullying in person, because the bully does not immediately see the effect their words have on the victim. As a result, bullying on social media often means more instances of bullying and language that is more hateful and violent than bullying is in person. This type of bullying is also more difficult for victims to escape, because it follows them into their homes via cell phones, tablets and computers. I feel safe in making the statement that all of us have heard the awful stories of young people who have felt so hopeless as a result of cyber-bullying that they have taken their own lives.

Trisha Prabhu, a 15 year old girl from Naperville, IL, was so disturbed as a result of one of these suicides that she decided to do something about it. Trisha, a self-proclaimed "science nerd," educated herself about the teenage brain. She was struck by the fact that the decision-making part of the brain is not fully developed until a person reaches their twenties. How, then, can we expect teens, who have access to social media at all times and who make up the majority of cyber-bullies, to make consistently good decisions about what they say over social media?

Trisha has developed an app called "Rethink" which monitors posts by flagging key words that might indicate a message that is hateful, hurtful, or offensive. When a word or phrase is flagged, a window pops up asking the sender if they are sure they want to send what they have written, because it may be offensive. The sender has the ability to send the message or cancel and "rethink" it. While this app is certainly not the answer to all cyber-bullying and cannot actually teach young people empathy, compassion and acceptance, it has been shown in an early study to be effective in cutting back on cyber-bullying by those chosen to test it.

At the very least, I think the app offers hope, because some teens are themselves concerned about cyber-bullying and working on methods with which to curb it. Who better than teens themselves to understand the best ways to reach their peers and increase the probability that they will spend more

time and thought before sending hurtful, and sometimes dangerous, messages via social media. Thank you, Trisha!

—Carla

Adapted from an article by ABC news August 26, 2015
<http://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/15-year-olds-rethink-app-aims-prevent-cyberbullying/story?id=33329748>



During Sexual Assault Awareness Month/Crime Victim's Rights Week 2015, the inmates and staff at the Racine Correctional Institution, where SAS regularly provides prevention programming, once again participated in several fundraising activities and donated the proceeds to SAS. We were very grateful to be the beneficiaries of their generosity. Thanks RCI! The photo above shows Vicki and Annabell (who provide the prevention programming) receiving the check from RCI staff.

SAS Program Statistics January—June 2015

Crisis Line Calls.....	74
Racine Hospital Visits.....	38
Burlington Hospital Visits.....	10
Legal Advocacy Sessions.....	11
New Counseling Clients.....	20
Counseling Sessions.....	555
Support Group Sessions.....	13
Community Presentations.....	49
CAC Appointments.....	98



Family Advocate

By Samantha Sustachek

At this point in time, it is well known in the Racine community that the Racine County Child Advocacy Center (CAC) serves victims of child abuse and neglect by providing forensic interviews, medical exams, and family advocacy services. What may not be as well known is that the CAC offers these same services to children who are witnesses to crimes. Often the crimes children witness involve some form of domestic violence (DV). Because October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I would like to use my column in this issue of "Branching Out" to explore the effects of DV on children. How do children react when they are not necessarily the primary victims of violence but are exposed to it on a regular basis?

Children respond uniquely to traumatic situations based on a number of factors. How a child reacts to living with domestic violence may be impacted by the frequency or severity of the violence, the child's relationship with the abuser and the victim, the age of the child, and any other stresses or conversely any positive activities or relationships in the child's life. Taking these factors into consideration, here are ten ways that children can potentially be changed by witnessing violence at home.

- 1. Children lack a positive male role model.** Not exclusively, but often, perpetrators of DV are male. Abusive men seem to either use authoritarian parenting or have little to do with children at all. Abusive behavior shows a lack of respect for a child's mother and can undermine her authority as a parent. This brings us to...
- 2. Mother/child bond is harmed.** An abused woman may lack confidence in her parenting or have her efforts to parent contradicted by an abuser. Abusers may even work to give children a negative view of their mothers as people not deserving of respect. Children may lose trust in their mothers as protectors or be angry at their mothers for staying with an abusive partner.
- 3. Children develop negative core beliefs about themselves.** All people have core beliefs about themselves, positive or negative. These core beliefs are developed in childhood and are greatly influenced by a child's parents. Children who live in abusive households may begin to believe that they are entitled to whatever they want, even if it negatively impacts others. They may believe that they do not have control over their own choices and have to take whatever bad luck comes their way. Female children may think that they are of less value because of their gender.
- 4. Children become isolated from supportive people.** Often DV is hidden from the world, not just by the abuser but by the victim as well. Children may learn or be taught that bad things will happen to the family if people find out about the situation. They learn to hide the violence at home from concerned adults who could listen to them and address the problem.

5. Unhealthy family roles develop. Roles in an abusive family reflect the adaptation and coping style of each family member. Children who witness DV react and adapt to confusing and dangerous situations.

6. Worldview shifts. Children who grow up in a safe, supportive environment are more likely to believe the world is fair. They have a sense of safety that allows them to enthusiastically take risks and try new opportunities. Children who grow up in a household with DV do not have that sense of safety. They see the world as an unpredictable place where children have to deal with their problems on their own, adults do not keep promises, and bad things may happen even when they try their hardest to be good.

7. Children have to deal with issues other than the abuse.

Abuse often co-occurs with other life stressors like parental substance abuse, criminal activity, incarceration, mental illness, poverty, and child abuse, among other negative situations.

8. Children may develop negative coping skills. Children are naturally adaptable, and that ability can serve them well when they are living with DV. Some coping skills, such as fantasizing about a better family life are not directly harmful, but others, like running away, can create new problems for children.

9. Rationalization of the abuse. Children absorb everything they are exposed to, so if their mother's partner insists that he is the man so he is in charge, they may begin to believe that. They may see women as inferior, excuse the abusive behavior, or even blame their mother for her own abuse. Children who rationalize the abuse may grow up to accept abuse in their own intimate relationships.

10. Belief that abuse is normal and unavoidable. When women stay in abusive relationships out of fear or a hope that things will improve, children, especially female children, may develop low expectations of men or believe that women should not expect happiness in their intimate relationships.

As children are changed in these ten ways (and probably more), they may experience symptoms like anxiety, sleeping issues (sleeplessness or nightmares), high activity levels, difficulty concentrating, and increased aggression. With long-term, chronic exposure to DV, children may grow up with physical health problems, and develop behavior problems in adolescence and emotional difficulties in adulthood. For all of these reasons, the CAC treats child witnesses to crimes with the same sensitivity and care as direct child victims. Children can heal from an experience of domestic violence, especially if they have a supportive, non-offending caregiver who helps them to feel safe and gets them into the services they need. Coming to the CAC can be an important first step in that healing process, where both non-offending caregivers and children are given support and resources to get out of dangerous situations and live a safer life.

—Sam

Article adapted from The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (www.nctsn.org) and "Little Eyes, Little Ears: How Violence Against a Mother Shapes Children as They Grow" (Cunningham & Baker, 2007).





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Stay Connected!



Join our News and Events email update list! Would you like to receive information on upcoming SAS events and volunteer opportunities? Email Samantha Sustachek at ssustachek@lsswis.org with "SAS news and events" in the subject line and she will include you in all SAS news and events related emails.

Sexual Assault Services seeks to create a safe and compassionate environment to help promote the healing of sexual assault survivors and their support people.

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